

**SHOULDER  
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Raising Teens Together



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# A UNIQUE APPROACH TO IMPACT RISKY TEEN BEHAVIOR



Recommendations made from the latest research on how parents and youth can thrive throughout the teen years.



# Think Lifelong Health

The teen years are some of the healthiest years of human life.

## THE CHALLENGES COME FROM RISKY BEHAVIORS SUCH AS:

- Tobacco Use
- Drinking Alcohol
- Drug Abuse
- Sexual Activity
- Poor Nutrition
- Violence (physical fighting, use of weapons or dating violence)
- Unintentional accidents (car or motorcycle crashes, sports injuries, or bicycle accidents)

*When parents and other adults help teens avoid these risks,  
they are setting the stage for lifelong health.*



# Teens will live up to our expectations

## Positive or Negative...

### WHAT WE USED TO BELIEVE ABOUT ADOLESCENCE

- The teen years are full of conflict and rebellious behavior
- Peers are more influential than parents
- Parents need to crack down or give up in order to survive

### WHAT WE KNOW NOW

- Problem behavior, family conflict, and psychological problems are no more common in adolescence than in any other time
- Parents who have strong connections with their teens really do have influence on their teens, peer pressure is overrated
- Parenting style matters – Positive Parenting works best

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## Positive Parenting is Ideal

### POSITIVE PARENTING

is warm, supportive and encouraging while being firm, consistent and clear with limits and boundaries.

- **HIGH** Nurturance
- **HIGH** Expectations
- **HIGH** Respect

*"I'm important in my teen's life. We have some good times and some bad times, but I'm there for the long run."*

### DOMINATING PARENTING

is harsh, punitive and rigid.

- **LOW** Nurturance
- **HIGH** Expectations
- **LOW** Respect

*"I need to really clamp down now that he's a teen.. If you give him an inch, he'll take a mile"*

### PERMISSIVE PARENTING

is inconsistent enforcement of rules, or no rules at all and a need to be a pal, more than a parent.

- **HIGH** Nurturance
- **LOW** Expectations
- **MODERATE** Respect

*"I really want to enjoy parenting my teen. It's important for them to fit in and have what they want, and not have too many rules. We get along better that way."*

### UNENGAGED PARENTING

is inconsistent presence in a child's life - teens raise themselves.

- **LOW** Nurturance
- **LOW** Expectations
- **LOW** Respect

*"It's time to let go now that my child's grown up. It's time to get my needs met. He can take care of himself."*

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## Positive Parents

Provide **LIMITS**, Give clear **RULES & BOUNDARIES** while  
**ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENCE...**

### RESEARCH SAYS:

Teens raised by **POSITIVE** parents:

- Do better in school
- Have lower rates of depression and stress
- Are less likely to engage in risky behavior
- Have better social skills
- Are more respectful
- Deal better with conflict

*Positive parenting has been shown to be the most effective parenting style.  
This is true across different cultural, racial and economic groups.*



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# **Shoulder to Shoulder Collaboration: U of MN Extension Service, Public Health agencies from Minneapolis, Dakota, Hennepin, Scott, St. Paul-Ramsey, and Bloomington/Richfield/Edina**

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**A new approach:  
REACH OUT TO  
PARENTS OF TEENS  
WITH A BROAD SOCIAL  
MARKETING CAMPAIGN**



## **Phase I (Fall 2002): 19 Focus Groups across Twin Cities**

- 159 parents
- 84% Female
- 64% Urban; 36% Suburban
- 69% Two-parent families
- 35% Caucasian
- 21% Hispanic
- 19% African-American
- 10% American Indian
- 10% Hmong





## **Finding: Parents Have a Broad, Assets-Based Definition of Health**

High self-esteem

Good communication skills

Connected to positive adults

Engagement and activity

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*



## **Finding: Parents Utilize Many Strategies to Impact Health**

Maintain open communication

Keep teens busy, active, involved

Hold teens accountable

Checking up

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*



## **Finding: Parents Want and Need Help From Other Parents**

- \*Parents feel isolated and insecure
- \*Parents are hungry to talk/share
- \*Connections, support and reassurance from experienced parents
- \*Parents want help within their own communities



## **Between Groups: There are Many Similarities**

Communication  
Active Involvement  
Accountability  
Peers  
Quality Time  
Health as a Positive Construct

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*



## Between Groups: There are Many Differences

- Low income parents sometimes feel powerless
- Middle income parents struggle to find a balance between work and family
- Upper income parents struggle to balance their expectations and their teens' well being

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*





## Between Groups: There are Many Differences

Parents of color, immigrants and non-English speakers face unique challenges

Need to teach good survival skills

Authoritarian parenting style

Anger at systems

Unique challenges for immigrants

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*



## Conclusion: See Parents as Experts

Parents value each other over experts

Experts as facilitators and coaches

Experts should build natural parent leaders

*Phase I: Focus Group Finding*

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Phase II Spring 2003:  
Create a social marketing  
campaign using research  
to reach parents of teens

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**Strategy:**  
**Reach parents at**  
**“transition point”**  
**for their teen**

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# Strategy: Branding and visual identity



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**Strategy:**  
**Use mass media**  
**to reach**  
**parents of teens**

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## Phase II Products:

- \*Website

- \*Parent resource guide  
mailer in September to  
37,000 households

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## Phase II Products:

- \*Outreach guide for agencies and worksites
- \*Multi-lingual phone scripts
- \*211 partnership

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## Phase II Products:

- \*Posters

- \*Ad templates

- \*Radio public service announcements

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION...**

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Visit our web site:

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Call:

**211** and ask for Shoulder to Shoulder





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